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Three Cups of Tea

By: Greg Mortenson & David Oliver Relin

Mortenson is back in Pakistan at the beginning of chapter 21, in 2002. The native people’s distrust of the U.S. government because of the war in Afghanistan makes it difficult for Mortenson to find sponsors that won’t hurt his reputation. His position improves, however, when Kevin Fedarko witnesses Mortenson pay for a young girl’s college education. Fedarko is a writer and publishes an article about Mortenson in Parade Magazine; which gives Americans a new alternative to war. Donations to the CAI pour in afterwards. Another Pakistani cleric, however, has declared a fatwa against Mortenson and has partially destroyed one of the CAI schools. The case goes before a conservative Muslim court and not only is the fatwa lifted, but the cleric is ordered to pay for damages to the school. A dangerous journey to visit Sadhar Khan concludes the book and leaves Mortenson hopeful about his future of helping the girls of the Middle East.

This roller-coaster of an autobiography finally pulled it together at the end to deliver a powerful message to its readers. Though I thought including the chapter about going to Afghanistan was unnecessary to the overall understanding of the plot, the final chapters tied everything together very nicely. It was enjoyable hearing that the second fatwa was lifted and that Mortenson finally gained the support of the religious leaders of the realm. I’m glad Greg Mortenson ultimately reached his goal and has continued to build schools for girls to this day (ha. Ha. Haaaaaaaaaa.).

After concluding this story, I have to say that the distinct inherent characteristic that spans time and culture is persistence. I know I already addressed this characteristic in a previous post, but it truly is the defining one of this book. Greg Mortenson dealt with so much in this story and still managed to grow and overcome these obstacles. His motivation to drastically change the lives of some many unfortunate girls in Pakistan is one that should not only be admired, but reflected by others.